

Envoyde
Chaucer a
Scogan

He wol nat with his arwes been ywroken
On thee, ne me, ne noon of our figure;
We shul of him have neyther hurt ne cure.

Now certes, frend, I drede of thyn unhappe,
Lest for thy gilt the wreche of Love procede
On alle hem that ben hore and rounde of shape,
That ben so lykly folk in love to spede.
Than shul we for our labour han no mede;
But wel I wot, thou wilt answer and seye:
Lo! olde Griseldist to ryme and pleye!

Nay, Scogan, sey not so, for I meexcuse,
God help me so! in no rym, doutelees,
Ne thinke I never of slepe wak my muse,
That rusteth in my shethe stille in pees.
Whyl I was yong, I putte hir forth in prees,
But al shal passe that men prose or ryme;
Take every man his turn, as for his tyme.

Envoy.

SCOGAN, that knelest at the stremes
heed
Of grace, of alle honour & worthinesse,
In thende of which strene I am dul
as deed,
forgete in solitarie wilderness;
Yet, Scogan, thenke on Tullius kindenesse,
Minne thy frend, ther it may fructifye!
farwel, and lok thou never eft Love defye!

LENVOY DE CHAUCER A BUKTON.
The conseil of Chaucer touching Mariage, which
was sent to Bukton.

MY maister Bukton, whan of
Criste our kinge
Was axed, what is trouthe
or sothfastnesse,
He nat a word answerde to
that axinge,
As who saith: No man is al
trewe, I gesse.
And therfor, thogh I
highte to expresse
The sorwe and wo that is in mariage,
I dar not wryte of hit no wikkednesse,
Lest I myself falle eft in swich dotage.

I wol nat seyn, how that hit is the cheyne
Of Sathanas, on which he gnaweth ever,
But I dar seyn, were he out of his peyne,
As by his wille, he wolde be bounde never.
But thilke doted fool that eft hath lever
Ycheyned be than out of prisoun crepe,
God lete him never fro his wo dissever,
Ne no man him bewayle, though he wepe.

But yit, lest thou do worse, tak a wyf;
Bet is to wedde, than brenne in worse wyse.
But thou shalt have sorwe on thy flesh, thy lyf,
And been thy wyves thral, as seyn these wyse,
And if that holy writ may nat suffise,
Experience shal thee teche, so may happe,
That thee were lever to be take in fryse
Than eft to falle of wedding in the trappe.

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Envoy.

HIS litel writ, proverbes, or figure
I sende you, tak kepe of hit, I rede;
Unwys is he that can no wele endure.
If thou be siher, put thee nat in drede.
The Wyf of Bathe I pray you that
ye rede

Of this matere that we have on honde,
God graunte you your lyf frely to lede
In fredom; for ful harde is to be bonde.
Explicit.

GENTILESSE. MORAL BALADE OF
CHAUCER.

HE firste stok, fader of
gentilesse...
What man that claymeth
gentil for to be,
Must folowe his trace, and
alle his wittes dresse
Vertu to sewe, and vyces
for to flee.

And noght the revers, sauflly dar I deme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

This firste stok was ful of rightwisnesse,
Trewe of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,
Clene of his goste, and loved besinesse,
Ageinst the vyce of slouth, in honestee;
And, but his heir love vertu, as dide he,
He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

Vyce may wel be heir to old richesse;
But ther may no man, as men may wel see,
Bequethe his heir his vertuous noblesse;
That is appropred unto no degree,
But to the firste fader in magestee,
That maketh him his heir, that can him queme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE. BALADE.

SOM tyme this world was so
stedfast and stable
That mannes word was
obligacioun,
And now hit is so fals and
deceivable,
That word and deed, as in
conclusioun,
Ben nothing lyk, for turned
up so down

Is al this world for mede and wilfulnessse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so variable
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?
Among us now a man is holde unable,
But if he can, by som collusioun,
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this, but wilful wretchednesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put down, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun,
Pitee exyled, no man is merciable,
Through covetyse is blent discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun
Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikelnesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

Envoy to King Richard.

PRINCE, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate ex-
torcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be
reprevable

To thyn estat, don in thy regioun.
Shew forth thy sword of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

Explicit.

BALADES DE VISAGE SANZ PEINTURE.
Le Pleintif coudre fortune.

HIS wretched worldes
transmutacioun,
As wele or wo, now povre
and now honour,
Withouten ordre or wys
discrecioun
Governed is by fortunes
erour;
But natheles, the lak of hir
favour

Ne may nat don me singen, though I dye,
Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour:
for fynally, fortune, I thee defye!

Yit is me left the light of my resoun,
To knowen frend fro fo in thy mirour.
So muche hath yit thy whirling up and down
Ytaught me for to knowen in an hour.
But trewely, no force of thy reddour
To him that over himself hath the maystrye!
My suffisaunce shal be my socour:
for fynally, fortune, I thee defye!

O Socrates, thou stedfast champioun,
She never mighte be thy tormentour;
Thou never drestdest hir oppressioun,
Ne in hir chere founde thou no savour.
Thou knewe wel deceit of hir colour,
And that hir moste worshippe is to lye.
I knowe hir eek a fals dissimulour:
for fynally, fortune, I thee defye!

La respounse de fortune au Pleintif.

O man is wretched, but himself hit
wene,
And he that hath himself hath
suffisaunce.
Why seystow thanne I am to thee
so kene,
That hast thyself out of my governaunce?
Seyst thus: Graunt mercy of thyn haboundaunce

That thou hast lent or this. Why wolt thou stryve?
What wostow yit, how I thee wol avaunce?
And eek thou hast thy beste frend alyve!

I have thee taught divisioun bitwene
frend of effect, and frend of countenaunce;
Thee nedeth nat the galle of noon hyene,
That cureth eyen derke fro hir penaunce;
Now seestow cleer, that were in ignoraunce.
Yit halt thyn ancre, and yit thou mayst arryve
Ther bountee berth the keye of my substaunce:
And eek thou hast thy beste frend alyve.

How many have I refused to sustene,
Sin I thee fostred have in thy plesaunce!
Woltow than make a statut on thy quene
That I shal been ay at thyn ordinaunce?
Thou born art in my regne of variaunce,
About the wheel with other most thou dryve.
My lore is bet than wikke is thy grevaunce,
And eek thou hast thy beste frend alyve.

La respounse du Pleintif coudre fortune.

HY lore I dampne, hit is adversitee.
My frend maystow nat reven, blind
goddesse!
That I thy frendes knowe, I thanke
hit thee.
Tak hem agayn, lat hem go lye on
presse!
The negardye in keping hir richesse
Prenostik is thou wolt hir tour assaile;
Wikke appetyt comth ay before seknesse:
In general, this reule may nat fayle.

La respounse de fortune coudre le Pleintif.

WOU pinchest at my mutabilitee,
For I thee lente a drope of my
richesse,
And now me lyketh to withdrawe me.
Why sholdestow my realtee
oppresser?
The see may ebbe and flowen more or lesse;
The welkne hath might to shyne, reyne, or hayle;
Right so mot I kythen my brotelnesse.
In general, this reule may nat fayle.

Lo, thexecucion of the magestee
That al purveyeth of his rightwisnesse,
That same thing fortune clepen ye,
Ye blinde bestes, ful of lewednesse!
The hevne hath propretee of sikernesse,
This world hath ever resteles travayle;
Thy laste day is ende of myn intresse:
In general, this reule may nat fayle.

Envoy de fortune.

PRINCES, I prey you of your
gentilesse,
Lat nat this man on me thus crye
and pleyne,
And I shal quyte you your bisinesse
At my requeste, as thre of you or
tweyne;

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Balades
de Visage
sanz
Peinture